

Remarks at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital and an Exchange With Reporters in
Fairfax, Virginia
July 9, 2001

Patients' Bill of Rights

The President. Thank you all for coming. Knox, thank you very much for setting up the meeting with Knox and hospital officials, nurses, former patients. We had a great discussion about the need for our Nation to pass legislation with America's patients in mind, that the whole core of a good bill recognizes that patients ought to have direct access to specialists, such as Dr. Berry, an ob-gyn, cancer specialists, that patients ought to have the capacity to take complaints to an independent review organization staffed by doctors and medical professionals.

We're making good progress. There is a lot of agreement on a bill that has—bills moving their way through the House of Representatives right now. But I want a bill to sign that does not run the cost of premiums up or health care up as a result of excessive lawsuits. I want a bill that honors patients, not trial lawyers, a bill that makes it easier for docs to do their job, as opposed to a bill that encourage excessive litigation.

I want to again thank you for the chance to visit.

Dr. Berry, you might want to say a few things.

[At this point, Dr. David B. Berry made brief remarks.]

The President. Okay, thank you all.

Q. Mr. President, any decisions on stem cell—

Q. What did you hear from the patients—

Q. What did the patients—

The President. The patients just want to make sure they've got access to specialists, and they, too, like the idea of having an independent review organization where they can take their complaints, where they can solve problems before it ends up in a court of law.

There are some people up there on the Hill that are interested in fostering excessive litigation, which is not good for patients. I think Americans understand that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in the boardroom following discussions in the hospital. In his remarks, he referred to J. Knox Singleton, chief executive officer, Inova Health System. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Videotaped Remarks to the NAACP Convention
July 9, 2001

Thank you very much. I'm honored to be able to send my greetings to you for the 92d annual convention of the NAACP.

Last year I joined you in person at your convention in Baltimore. I said that there is no denying the truth that racism, despite all our progress, still exists and that there's no escaping the reality that the party of

Lincoln has not always carried the mantle of Lincoln. I said that recognizing and confronting our history is important but transcending our history is essential. A year has passed since I gave that speech, and nearly 6 months have passed since I became the President. We must continue our work to ensure that my party keeps faith with the

memory of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

I started by selecting a diverse, well-qualified Cabinet and senior staff. People like Colin Powell, Rod Paige, Condoleezza Rice, and Larry Thompson are tearing down barriers and setting new standards for excellence. Appointments are important, but so is the agenda.

I've made reform of our public schools my number one priority. I have worked closely with Democrats and Republicans in Congress to craft a bill that gives our schools more money but asks our schools for more in return. High standards, accountability, and a culture of excellence is the hallmark of school reform. Every child can learn, and no child should be left behind. I believe my education package is an important step in ensuring that our schools are worthy of our children's dreams.

And my agenda also includes moving forward on my Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. All across the country, private religious and community organizations are serving and uplifting the Nation's poor through a variety of services, from feeding the hungry to providing drug treatment to educating children with disabilities. Our Faith-Based and Community Initiative reflects my belief that Government must be active enough to support these charitable groups but humble enough to let good people in local communities provide such services.

Finally, my agenda is based on the principle of equal opportunity and equal justice. Yet, for too long, too many African Americans have been subjected to the unfairness of racial profiling. That's why, earlier this year, I asked Attorney General John Ashcroft to develop specific recommendations to end racial profiling. It's wrong, and it must be ended in America.

There are other ways my agenda will help ensure that the American Dream touches every willing heart, from creating opportunities for affordable housing and

health care to encouraging savings and reducing taxes on working people. But throughout, my agenda is laced with some common themes: trusting the people, empowering communities and charities, and creating one nation of justice and equality.

It matters what Presidents do. It also matters what Presidents say and how they say it. I've tried to speak in a tone that brings us together and unites us in purpose. I believe that even when disagreements arise, we should treat each other with civility and with respect. That is a basic requirement of democracy.

When he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., said that whenever he was on an airplane, he was always reminded of how dependent we all are on each other. He said, "A flight is successful only because of the hard work and devotion of the known pilots and unknown ground crew." His point was that we all have a role to play, and we cannot succeed as a group unless each one of us succeeds as an individual.

As the President of one of the most diverse nations in the world, I carry the responsibility of making sure that every voice is heard and every person is respected. This is the legacy and the unfinished work of Lincoln, King, and so many others, in ways large and small, have brought us to where we are today. They dreamt of a unified America. Now we must continue to work to convert that dream into a reality.

I hope you have a productive and successful convention. And I look forward to working with you on matters that are vital to America.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 3 p.m. on July 2 in the Library at the White House for later transmission to the convention in New Orleans, LA. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 9.